

# Curriculum Leadership Institute E-Hint

## **How Do New Teachers Learn About the District's Processes for Managing Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment?**

As school districts develop and implement curriculum, much care is taken to be sure all teachers are aware of their responsibilities, even if they did not help write the new curriculum. The Subject Area Committee (SAC) assures that all teachers know how to ask for clarification, express a concern, or request resource support. This type of communication continues when assessments are developed as well. If the SAC has done a good job of communicating, teachers who have been part of the district through a complete cycle know how the curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes work. But what about new staff members? How is this information communicated to them?

Each year, most school districts have some turnover in staff. Regardless of whether the newly hired teachers are new to the teaching profession or just new to the district, their success in the classroom cannot be assured if they don't understand the district's curriculum, instruction, and assessment processes. With a clearly articulated model, such as the Curriculum Leadership Institute (CLI) Model, it is imperative to orient new teachers in the processes and vocabulary before the school year begins and to provide training throughout their first year.

New teacher orientation usually includes three types of information: (1) building-level information, such as policies, extra duty expectations, schedules, how many students they will have in their classroom, and where to find or how to request supplies; (2) district information such as certification details, health insurance processes, contract issues and such; and (3) community information – on a limited basis. However, it is particularly important that new teachers in the district also become familiar with whatever the district's curriculum development process/model happens to be. In a district where teachers will be expected to teach for results and are therefore held accountable for teaching to outcomes, it is imperative that they know "how things are done."

An orientation session for new teachers should include such topics as:

- An introduction to the district's curriculum model/process
- A clear indication of the importance of the model to the district
- A history of what has been accomplished in terms of curriculum development and what is still "in the process" (The district Long Range Plan is an excellent resource for the teacher to have)

- A clear understanding of how the local curriculum process is connected to the state curriculum requirements
- How the curriculum is governed
- How to use and where to find the curriculum document, as well as the Instructional Plans and assessments that were developed for the curriculum
- What responsibilities teachers have for input about success of the curriculum
- What data is collected and for what purposes
- What the expectations and accommodations are for reteaching and retesting
- How student success on the local curriculum is measured and reported
- How a new teacher could get involved in the curriculum process

As the school year progresses, it is probable that new teachers will have many questions. A plan for continuing new staff orientation throughout the year will likely prove valuable. As the school year starts, a new teacher's needs are so numerous that details may be forgotten, and new questions may arise. If there are scheduled and well-planned opportunities that provide answers at frequent intervals, the impact on student learning in the new teacher's classroom will be positive. Many of the topics in the initial orientation should be revisited once the teacher settles into the routine of the school year. The details will mean much more to teachers as they progress through the curriculum and the evaluation of students.

New teachers have a tremendous challenge before them, especially if they teach in a results-based system. Investing in new teacher orientation activities gives the teacher a leg up in the critical areas of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and provides a solid base from which the teachers can plan and provide the best possible education experience for their students.